



Dunmore School

'How to cope!'



Dear Parents/Carers

We would like to say thank you and well done for supporting us at this time by keeping your child at home. Here are some hints and tips to help you structure and manage your days! Sorry if they sound a bit obvious or patronising. Most of them are given in response to questions that we've had from you and are given without judgement of your parenting style.

We recognise that 'good enough' parenting is absolutely ok! Don't forget to look after yourselves, too!

REMEMBER: at school **we** are not being expected to 'educate' the children of key workers. We are there to provide child-care. You do not need to feel pressured into **home-schooling** your child during this period. Just give them the best care you can.

Weekly topics: We will be following these with the children who are still at school too – this will help us ensure that all children have some common experiences to talk about when this is all back to normal!

Our day: *FROM 9-3*

We would strongly advise making a daily timetable with your child so that they can see – in pictures or words what you are going to be doing each day.

Most of the day in Reception and Nursery is for children to play *independently* (without adults!!!!)

We will carry on with 4-6 10-15 minute 'adult focussed' times per day. This will depend on the age and concentration span of each child and what you can manage.

When children are 'free playing' it is very important that they know you have 'jobs to do' – they will try to get as much attention from you as possible. Let them know their boundaries very clearly and that you need time apart from each other.

Let them know that you're still there if they get hurt or are sad – or want to share something wonderful!

Make a diary of this extraordinary time using Tapestry – if you've lost/forgotten your login then ring or email us on 01235 520550 or david.kendell@dunmore.oxon.sch.uk and we'll be in touch.

Being outside is vital for children in Reception and Nursery. We offer up to half the day outside. This could be a problem if you're ill or socially distancing... so you might have to be creative!

Watch some of the programming on the BBC for your child's age group. It's on-line and the iplayer and called BBC Teach. We'll be doing that most days here too, again, so that we have some common experiences to talk about.

Children need down time and 'boredom' in order to grow and process what is going on – so build that into your day too.

Watch out for Parentmail: we'll send regular updates on who to contact and when if you have a learning related query.

If you are worried about a safeguarding risk for your own or other children or vulnerable adults then please act on that worry.

Call the police on 999 or the MASH (Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub) 0345 050 7666 if a child is in immediate danger.

Finally, make sure *you* get regular cups of tea and biscuits - just like we need to at school too!

Personal Social and Emotional Development

Be available for your child whenever they have a question about what is going on. Be as honest as you can be with the information that you are sure of. We would advise that this should NOT be from social media but from the daily briefings given by the government.

Make sure that your house rules stay the same. As you know we have 5 very simple rules (or Class codes) at school. Be kind (use kind hands), sit neatly and listen for learning times, we all help to tidy up, we use indoor voices inside (and shout outside!!!), we share with others.

Try to ensure that children are not overhearing your conversations about the virus and your own anxieties/worries. If they are worried then make a worry box/bag or monster to draw or write the worry and put it in. Talking about worries is the best way to make them smaller nothing will make them go away completely. Try to encourage children to make the worry seem smaller by filling time with thinking about something else, like making something, reading something or building something.

Communication and Language

Your children don't have a problem in talking to you - just make sure that there is time for this in the day. Maybe have a talk time so that it gives it some structure or even some Show and Tell!

Talk through old Tapestry posts and about plans for new ones!

We make sure that children have time to answer as often as we can in school – up to ten seconds – which feels like a long time!

A great way of stretching vocabulary is 'Match +1' which works by saying back exactly what the child says with one more word added: Child: "It's a big red car!" Dad: "It's a big red electric car!"

Play lots of word games: "I Spy" or "My Granny Went to Market" are great for building memory, speaking and early reading and spelling skills.

Physical Development

Try some fine motor and pencil control activities such as threading beads, using peg boards, tweezer control and even googling "dough disco" – you'll love this one! Play dough recipes are on Google if you need them.

Lego and construction toys also strengthen finger and hand muscles for writing.

Try to watch Joe Wicks' daily PE session although they might not be aimed at such young children.

CBBC and CBeebies has lots of physical and dance-based programs so dip into those when you can.

Literacy

Phonics: don't be scared!

For NURSERY look at PHASE ONE activities which is mostly listening to and talking about sounds in the world around us.

Be brave: MAYBE use this opportunity to listen to the DAWN CHORUS with your children: set the alarm and get up early – then head back to bed – that's ok too!! You'll never get such a good opportunity to hear it as now.

For RECEPTION children work on Phase 2, 3 and 4 the children will find their own way through the games in our links of on the website.

Use PHONICS PLAY for games and LETTERS AND SOUNDS for information for you and printed resources if you want to.

Reading: Read at least 2 picture books to your child a day. Look at the Booktrust website together for the 'Top 100' children's books of all time <https://www.booktrust.org.uk/> let us know on Tapestry what you think of them in verbal book reviews. You'll be able to find most of them being read on YouTube. Then maybe you could invest in a few of your favourites when this is all over!

Your Reception child will be able to use phonics that they know to sound out words in all kinds of places. Challenge them to find sounds, letters or words in any written material: newspapers, magazines, comics, recipe books, seed packets or packaging from the supermarket. MAKE YOUR OWN DICTIONARY of new words that your child reads.

Writing: Most children in this age band DO NOT want to write. Don't force them. If they want to help you write a shopping list or a card for a family member then all the better but really don't worry about this bit. Drawing and having a go at labels for the drawings is a much more useful and fun way to learn to control mark making tools like pens and pencils! If you plan an art/craft activity try to get your child to draw their ideas before they start and then add words to let you know what they need/want to achieve.

Maths

We always try to count forwards and backwards every time we count to help children learn the pattern of number names inside out – only really need to go to 10 for Nursery age and 20 for Reception but some find it fun so go with it! Enjoy counting to large numbers such as 100! We are focusing on specific numbers to 10 and ensuring the children have a deep understanding of each number, different ways to make it and the number that is one more and one less. Have a look at the maths links on our web page for help with this. Encourage the children to look at and talk about shapes in the environment and have been looking at the number of sides flat (2D) shapes have as we learn about a number e.g hexagons when learning about the number 6. We use lots of 'hunt' games with tally charts for how many shapes of each kind we can find etc. Try to talk about shapes when building and constructing with lego, blocks or even safe stuff from your recycling bin!

Understanding the World

It's a marvellous time of year to be spotting changes in the world around you.

Grow something, remember you can plant seeds into most containers (old Costa cups are great!): they just need soil (dig it up from the garden, park or verge with a spoon if you have to!) and drainage holes to let the water run through. Start them off on a sunny south facing window-sill. Onions and garlic cloves grow really well if you push them about half-way into the soil. The stems get very tall and you can measure and draw pictures of them in a "plant diary" to share with us.

Try cutting the top off a carrot (just like you do to get it ready for cooking). Put this in a saucer of water and eventually you should get a lovely green flush of new leaves! These can get quite tall too! Finally don't forget that each seed on the outside of a strawberry or inside a tomato will grow into a new plant: so get going!

Maybe even plan and plant out a Victory in Europe veg plot and DIG FOR VICTORY!

Talk about how you and your family normally celebrate Easter or other festivals that might happen during this time. Maybe you could tell us about this in a Tapestry post?

Talk about your community, who lives near you? What have you found out about your neighbours while you've been at home? Have you made any new friends or been in touch with any family members in unusual ways?

Let us know on Tapestry how you are and what marvellous things you've been doing. If you can send video it can take short clips too!

MOST IMPORTANTLY keep a diary or blog about what is happening each day: we're never going to have this opportunity again (we hope!) so find ways to remember how amazingly weird it is!

Expressive Arts and Design

Your children are really good at this bit!

Sing

Dance

Act out stories and experiences (like going to the doctor/hospital/school!)

Make pictures, models, buildings and talk about what you want to do, how you'll do it and how it turned out!

Make a song bag with a symbol to represent your favourite songs (a star for Twinkle ,Twinkle Little Star etc) – then pull them out of the bag and have a concert!

Make story sacks – bags of props/puppets or costumes to help enrich your favourite stories.

Remember that you can make a story character out of anything at all, you don't need to have a Big Bad Wolf to tell the story of the Three Little Pigs as you have your imaginations!! He can be a yoghurt pot or even the inside of a toilet roll – BUT DON'T PANIC BUY THEMPLEASE!!! 😊

And make sure you do all these things with the children, rather than for them!

Then take a few pics and upload them to Tapestry for us to share!